BOOK NOTES

We are pleased to be selling so many copies of *Peake's Commentary of the Bible,* which is the most resourceful one-volume commentary in print. It is an old one, tried and tested for generations, but has been completely revised and brought up to date. While the price is 34.50, you are to remember that it is a library within itself.

For only 3.75 we will send you *A Pattern for Life* by A. M. Hunter, which is an exposition on the Sermon on the Mount. His thesis is that the Sermon is not a utopia but a real design for living for one who accepts the gospel. *Interpreting the Parables,* which opens up the meaning of the parables, 60 of them, is also by A. M. Hunter, and is 4.55.

Mid-Life Crises by W. E. Hulme will be helpful to the caring Christian, for it identifies the problems of the middle years and provides resources for dealing with them. He deals with how to handle the changes that come in a youth-oriented world. 5.95.

We do not know how long *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* by Robert Richardson will be in print, but it is still available, two volumes in one, at 19.95, and it remains the most important work ever produced on the Restoration Movement. Another important publication on our Movement, *The Evangelist,* has been republished and is available at 99.95. It is the 10-volume journal of Walter Scott, until recently unavailable. It makes a beautiful set and is a great source for historical study.

For 7.50 we will send you *Cruden's Concordance,* which gives you a listing of all the key words of Scripture, free of the clutter of insignificant words.

At a bargain price of only 5.95 (usually 8.95) we will send you Dr. James Dobson's *Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives,* as long as supply lasts. It makes delightful reading as well be being highly informative and useful.

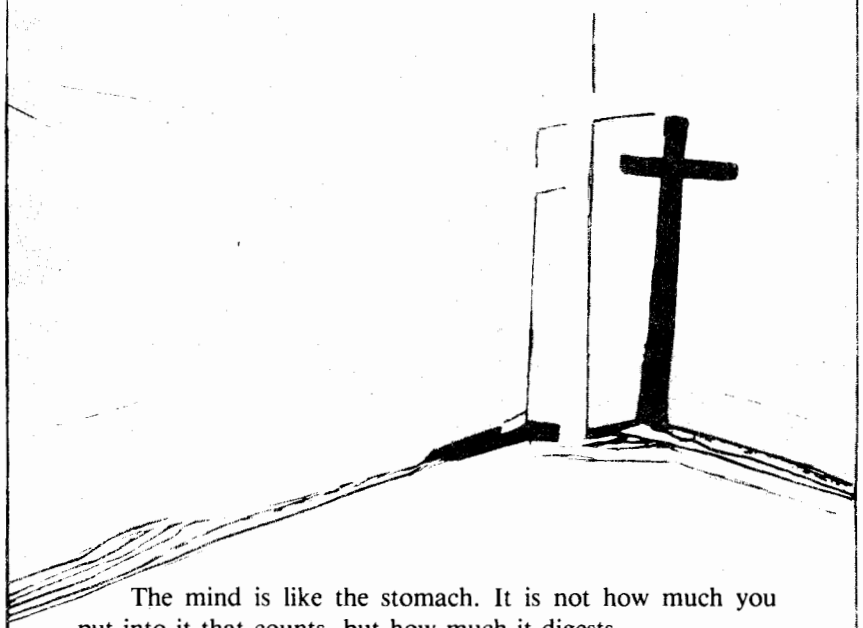
A very helpful volume on a crucial issue is Robert Palmer's *What the Bible Says About Faith and Opinion* at 13.50. He relates the subject to the question of fellowship.

An eminently readable book on the life and teaching of Jesus is *Jesus: Lord and Saviour,* by A. M. Hunter. Now retired from his chair at Aberdeen in Scotland, the author shares a lifetime of study of the New Testament.

Due to an auto accident our binder has been incapacitated much of this year and has therefore been unable to turn out our 1979 bound volume. Because of this we have decided to issue a double volume as we have done three times previously. So 1979-1980 will be bound together and issued as soon as our binder is able to get to it. If you have placed an order for either of these years, it will be assumed that you wish the double volumn and it will be sent with invoice as soon as it is ready. We are sorry about this delay.

Our theme for 1981, beginning with the next issue, will be *Jesus Today,* drawn from that great passage in Heb. 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever."

RESTORATION REVIEW



The mind is like the stomach. It is not how much you put into it that counts, but how much it digests.

— Albert Jay Nock

A program for the unrigid mind was once given me by a friend who himself had it from an old sea captain. What we need if we want to stay flexible and young in our minds, the old captain said, is to be "limber, loving, and a little loony."

— H. O. Overstreet

Vol. 22, No. 10 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **December, 1980**

RULES FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE MIND

In this last installment of our series on responsible thinking, to put it one way, we will venture upon a few specific rules for the proper direction of the mind. Our society is becoming so permissive that it is hardly appropriate to talk about rules of any kind. But this is the grand illusion of our age: *that we can be indifferent to rules.* Rules be hanged, we are resolved to do what we will!

That great English writer whose pen name was Stendahl but whose real name was Henri Beyl was satisfied as an essayist to follow but one rule: "I see but one rule: to be clear. If I am not clear, all the world crumbles to nothing." That's not a bad one for a writer, and woe be to those who have no rules, whatever be their calling. One rule may be adequate if it be of sufficient quality, such as Tennyson's poetic hope: "Ah, when shall all men's good be each man's rule?"

All areas of life depend upon recognized rules, whether it be health, economics, education, politics. No home can long endure when rules are ignored. There are rules to friendship as well as to nuclear physics. As early as 1682 William Penn, writing about government, insisted that a people can be free so long as they are ruled by laws rather than by men.

It should be conceded, therefore, that there are also rules or laws for rational thinking, and that these laws are as sovreign as any other laws. If they are ignored or violated, they demand a recompense.

There has been at least one great thinker who was convinced that he had discovered a universal and infallible method of reasoning, Rene Descartes, who was a mathematician as well as philosopher. He called his discovery "rules for the direction of the mind," 21 in number which he spent years devising. Disillusioned with what he learned from teachers, Descartes turned to "the book of the world" in his search for truth. Then he made himself the object of his study. These new sources of investigation revealed the way one's mind should go. He believed God confirmed his conclusions in a series of dreams during 1619, and he resolved to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin at Loretto in gratitude for his discovery.

One of the most important of the rules is that the mind should seek to investigate, not what others have said or thought, but only what can be clearly and distinctly determined by an application of the senses, and thus the conclusions drawn will be only those that are certain.

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Living near the close of the so-called Dark Ages and at the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment, Descartes was calling for a completely new method of study and investigation. The world had too long accepted things as true because Aristotle had taught it. Descartes insisted that things must be seen *as they are* and that conclusions must be drawn accordingly. At one time the old mathematician was led to doubt everything, even that he was at that moment sitting before the fire, which he presumably was. He might be deceived or dreaming. Resolving that at least one proposition was unquestionably true, *I think,* he went on to affirm his own existence, *I think, therefore I am,* which is one of the great quotations in the history of ideas. This was his entree to certainty. If he existed, others like him existed; moreover, God exists. God's universe thus became his laboratory, especially the human mind. Man *can* know for sure by the proper application of mind to God's creation.

True, some things cannot be known. Never mind. Concentrate upon the thinks that can be clearly and distinctly perceived. Study these as long as necessary. The study may never end, and conclusions are drawn only as the evidence makes them certain. With this rule Descartes was persuaded that he had given the world an entirely new approach to knowledge. He was anticipating the age of science and scientific method, and it was what Alexander Campbell called, in applying this to Biblical studies, "the inductive method of Bible study."

Campbell was the Descartes of his time, calling a new nation on a new frontier to a new way of looking at Scripture. Rather than build one's faith upon the theological systems of antiquity, wipe the slate clean and presume to know nothing, the young reformer urged, insisting that the Bible be viewed as a new book and studied with a new method. Interpret it as you would any other literature, he urged, and draw no conclusions except those forced upon you by what is clearly evident. Strength of evidence should determine the degree of faith we have in any proposition, he contended.

Descartes and Campbell thus agree that there is a *method* of investigation. One is not left to whim, caprice, accident, or tradition. He can be sure by applying the rules for the direction of the mind.

Another such rule given by Descartes was that truth comes by starting with the simple facts, those that are more obviously true, and moving toward the more complex and difficult. The simple truths, once gathered, tend to shed light on the more obscure, and gradually the more difficult also becomes simple. He backed up this rule with another: that all facts should be separated into simple and complex, or what is simply known from what is only supposed. To Descartes this is the great secret of learning: *to know what you know and to know what you don't know.* And always keep these separated!

To refer to but one more of his rules, one that would spare us many a woe in our study of the Bible: *when you come upon a matter that is clearly beyond the mind's ability to comprehend with any degree of certainty, stop there and go no further and draw no conclusions.*

Decartes would say that discussion on such a matter as the identity of Paul's thorn in the flesh is mere speculation and therefore foolish and unprofitable. We should place the fact that Paul had such a thorn in the category of the known and the nature of that thorn in the realm of the difficult and obsure. Starting with the simple, we may properly proceed to the obsure. But when it becomes evident that there is no way for us to know what Paul's thorn was — positively no way! — we stop there and go no further. Some things cannot be known, and this applies to more things in the Bible than we usually admit. We love to theologize, speculate, and opinionize, all to no profit. This breeds sects and false standards for unity and fellowship.

These rules, which have long since been accepted by critical thinkers, would liberate us from a lot of our Church of Christisms, which are based upon tradition and what others have said rather than careful conclusions drawn from what is clearly and distinctly set forth in Scripture. We often make opinions tests of fellowship and our own deductions, drawn from obscurities rather than certainties, matters of faith. It is common for us to be influenced as much or even more by what the Bible does not say than what it does say, clearly and distinctly. — *the Editor*

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE FOUNTAIN OF AGE

It has now been two years since I reached that golden milestone of threescore years. By virtue of staying alive in this uncertain world I have earned the right to think in terms of the fountain of age rather than the fountain of youth. But I am thinking of age in a special context, and that is in reference to the ministry of the Holy Guest of heaven in our lives. My thesis in this short piece is that even the Spirit of God, like us mortals, is hampered by time as well as by opportunity. Surely the Spirit is a gentleman who will not impose himself upon us, and he will not move in and make his home in our hearts unless we invite him. But even when we invite him in it takes time for him to do his thing with us. So age is on our side. If we are open to the Spirit's influence, each passing year should make us more aglow with the fruit of love, joy, and peace. The fountain of age, therefore, should well up for us deep treasures from the heart of God.

It is like marital bliss, and as I ponder the years I have spent with my dear Ouida the word *bliss* is most appropriate. But a couple's love in the first two or three decades hardly compares with the maturing years when at last they stand together at the fountain of age. The early years of love are vigorous, exciting, and even reckless, as well as romantic — and we all cherish those years — but those in their 50's and 60's, and perhaps even more in their 70's and 80's, have something special going for them. It is not easy to describe, but Ouida and I now enjoy each other more than ever before. We do not have to *go* and *do* (though that's fun too), but simply enjoy each other's presence. There is no king or prince in all the world's domains that cherishes his queen or princess any more than I do mine. And age makes a difference.

The life of the Spirit within us is like that. The Spirit must feel much more at home when he has been around for awhile, enduring our foibles and helping us in our weaknesses. Just as our cells are under going change and replenishing our bodies, the Holy Spirit is at work renewing our inner person, conforming us more and more into the image of Christ. If it takes two decades or so to grow a body, it may take even more to nurse a soul into the meekness and gentleness of Jesus.

What is more glorious on this earth than an aged soul ripened and matured by the finger of God, which through the years quickens and chastens as well as soothes and succors? I think of Ouida's mother, who, even when I first met her 37 years ago was the epitome of the Christian graces, but who now stands like an old oak that provides cool shade for any in need of refuge. The Guest of heaven moved into her life almost three-quarters of a century ago, and it is obvious that he has been busy cultivating his fruit through the years. *Gentleness* is the Spirit's fruit, and we must conclude that "the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit" is precious in God's eyes in men and women alike.

I have been reading a book entitled *With Wings As Eagles* by Perry Gresham, who was president of Bethany College when I taught there. In presenting his philosophy on ageing, Perry shares his resolutions with his readers, one of which is that in his old age he will not be a bore by being a monologist who has to talk and cannot listen. He is also determined not to brag, realizing that the modest accomplishments in one's life have a way of being exaggerated through the years. He also promises to wear his glasses when he shaves, lest he leave those patches of gray that gives the appearance of a bedraggled bird in moulting season. He also wants a friend around the house who will love him well enough to apprise him when he smells of booze, garlic, onions, cigars, dogs or sweat.

And while he resolves to accept ageing for what it is and not stupidly pretend that he is still young, he has no intention of withdrawing from the drama of life, and he will enjoy the continual renewing that "waiting upon the Lord" will bring one at any age. Even if he has retired from his life's work as an educator, he refuses to retire his mind, but will continue to make friends and entertain ideas. Above all, his rule for old age is the Golden Rule and his philosophy to love and be loved, and he is adamant about never becoming an opinonated, unreasonable, stubborn old bullhead.

This is another way of saying that one should yield to the influence of the Spirit of God and become sweeter, gentler, more reasonable, and more responsible with each passing year. The notion that old age must mean senility, boorishness, childishness, and a meaningless and unproductive life is a cruel myth. The ageing Christian can show the kindness and consideration for others that only years can cultivate, and his latter years hold promise of being his most productive. Dr. Gresham insists that old age does not even have to mean a faulty memory, for one can remain mentally alert through mental exercises and by working at it more in the maturing years. Continual surges and renewal are what it is all about, he says, and life does not have to be on a declining plateau from age 60 onward.

The apostle Paul showed special respect to "those who were in Christ before me." Years in Christ, many years in Christ, should make a big difference. If Paul expected the believers in Rome to be "aglow with the Spirit," how radiant that glow should become as Jesus makes his home within us year after year. Paul was in those maturing years when he wrote *Romans* and now he writes of the *power* of the Spirit (twice in chap. 15) the *joy* of the Spirit, the *love* of the Spirit, and even the *sanctification* of the Spirit.

Love, joy, sanctification! These are power-packed, and they are the resources of renewal for the whole of life. The Spirit's glow need not be dimmed by the passing years. To the contrary, the more and the longer we "wait upon the Lord" and yield our spirits to the guidance of heaven's Guest within us, the greater will be that spiritual fire. It is like a torch in the hands of a herald. The more — and the longer — you shake it the brighter it burns. — *the Editor*

To love God with all the mind brings the human intellect into service. One of the most neglected aspects of the Judeo-Christian tradition is the intellectual love of God. — Perry Gresham in *With Wings As Eagles.*

ARE ELDERS TO SELECT ELDERS?

It is common practice among Churches of Christ for the elders to select their own successors, or, if the *eldership* (a term we might in time examine) is to be increased in number, the incumbent elders in one way or another determine who the additional elders will be. This makes the eldership a self-perpetuating body with lifetime prerogatives over a congregation, which itself is both a moral and political hazard for all concerned, including the elders themselves, who are often men who have no intention of arrogating powers unto themselves but who are nonetheless victimized by the System.

We might get at this problem by my telling how we select elders at our congregation here in Denton. It is on my mind since we have just been through an election, selecting an overseer to join the four we have already, of which I am one. I can state at the outset that the present presbyters had no more to do with the election process than any other member of the congregation. Ouida and I were seated in our regular place in the assembly on Lord's day morning when one of the election committee handed each of us a ballot. We marked it according to our convictions and turned it back to the committee. They soon announced to us that a brother had been selected by receiving at least 75% of the votes cast, and that one of the present elders had been reelected on the same basis.

An elder is rotated out after a three-year term unless he is again elected by secret ballot. I can state unequivocally that the present pastors never discussed who should or should not be elected. It is our task to *function* as shepherds, not to sit as judges as to who should be a shepherd. That is the congreation's business. It is but a caricature of the free process for elders to impose their will upon the church under the guise of "If no objections are made this week, the following will become elders" or some such rubric. Such superficiality is an insult to both the intelligence and the nature of a congregation of believers. As the Body of Christ the members are to function together as a unit, "by that which every joint supplieth," which surely includes the decision-making process.

Our election committee set up studies and prayer sessions leading up to the election. It solicited nominations from the membership. Since this results in a proliferation of names, we will probably in the future require that one must be recommended by at least five people to be nominated. The committee contacts the nominees to see if they wish to be considered, which greatly reduces the list since so few desire the work or consider themselves qualified. Some nominated women, including Ouida Garrett. The brother who nominated her believes women should be among the bishops and was sincere in his suggestion that Ouida be considered. There is nothing that would keep a sister's name off the ballot, but she would

stand no chance of getting 75% of the votes — not in this generation at least. A member of the committee called Ouida dutifully to ask if she wanted to be considered. She quietly declined. Anything she does is done quietly. Her first reaction was that it was a joke, and I think she was pleased to learn that it was done most sincerely. The brother is right. Ouida *would* make a good elder! But getting her elected . . . It would be like running Margaret Chase Smith for President.

Once we select an elder in this democratic way, we proceed to ordain him. It is an oddity, especially since the scriptures say so much about ordination, that our churches hardly ever ordain anybody. Our elders are selected, usually by other elders, but not ordained. At our ordination service, on a Lord's day morning, a brother (usually the chairman of election committee) represents the congregation in publicly accepting the man as a pastor of the congregation and assuring him of the church's love, loyality, and cooperation. One of the elders accepts him as a fellow overseer, assuring him that all the elders are ready to work with him in shepherding the flock of God. And then, according to Scripture, he is ordained by an evangelist, a minister of the gospel, with some such words as: "In behalf of this congregation I now ordain you as an elder and shepherd, etc." This is followed by prayers in behalf of both the new elder and the congregation, that the new relationship will be to the glory of God and pleasing to the Chief Shepherd.

The ordination service should recognize that while elders are actually made by the Holy Spirit, if they are truly elders, the selection is made by the church itself. That is, the members know who their true pastors are, men made so by the Spirit, and they select them accordingly. The office, *office* here meaning only a recognized function within the Body, belongs to the congregation, not to the elders. The church bestows the office on the man. It is *not* his by some kind of divine right. And the church can take the office back if need be. That is why the evangelist in ordaining should say, "In behalf of the congregation . . ." He is serving as an agent of the church, where all offices or functions have their home. "God hath set some in the church . . ." (1 Cor. 12:29) shows that the offices are in the church to be bestowed according to need. Elders often behave among us as if the office was theirs, and this is certainly the implication when they presume to fill vacancies by their own choices. This is also evident when they presume that they are elders for life and responsible to no one but themselves, as if the office is theirs by some kind of divine fiat.

Elders often overlook the scriptural fact that God has given such offices *to the church.* The church should therefore select those who fill such functions, and if the office is abused through incompetence or oppressive tactics, they can take it back the same way they gave it. A built-in safeguard is to limit the term of office.

Much of this process is a matter of wisdom and expediency since the Scriptures do not specify just how elders are to be selected and ordained. That a church is to have elders is clear from such passages as Philip. 1:1. That they are to be selected is implied from Acts 6:5, where functionaries are chosen by the whole church. That they are to be ordained is stated in Acts 14:23, while Tit. 1:5 reveals that this was done by evangelists. Acts 6 is especially relevant, for here even the apostles themselves would not select those that were to serve the church, but rather said:"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." It also distinguishes between choosing and ordaining. The church selected them and the apostles ordained them.

It is high time that our elders everywhere return to the churches their just prerogatives. To do otherwise is to strip the church of its dignity as the Body of Christ and to make the members mere spectators instead of participants. The most grievous sin of all is to deny people their just rights and to assume to do their thinking for them. But it is almost as bad a sin for the people to allow it to be so. If our people do not choose to be free, there are always those who are willing to take freedom from them. — *the Editor*

Travel Letter . . .

THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

I am presently at the Religious Retreat Center in Seoul, Korea where I am the speaker for some 50 folk from Churches of Christ-Christian Churches from all over this republic. Most of them are American military personnel serving short assignments and eager to return to their homes in Tennessee and Texas. These annual retreats provide opportunity for fellowship between Christians who rarely get to be with each other, scattered as they are in camps and installations all over this country. Bert and Marg Ellis, missionaries among Christian Churches, are here from Pusan, 250 miles to the south, where they have labored sacrificially for 22 years. A young sister is here from one of the camps along the DMZ, 30 miles to the north, where she is an army photographer, and where north and south Koreans gaze threateningly at each other and preside over weaponry capable of destroying this nation that is known in history as "the land of the morning calm."

The sister from the DMZ, who came alone by bus, explained that she has no Christians with whom to associate. I urged her to pray that the Spirit would lead her to make such contacts, that surely among all those thousands there are those with whom she could study and enjoy fellowship.

She seemed confused when I suggested that she not limit herself to Church of Christ people. Indeed, I fear I am spoiling an otherwise good retreat for a number of these folk, who are adamant in their conviction that the only Christians in Korea are those in the Church of Christ. That means that in this Buddhist-Confucianist land where only about 15% are "Christians," only about one-hundredth of 1% of that 15% are really Christians. Those are in some 80 mostly small congregations that are hardly more than house churches. The Christian Churches have some 120 such churches, due largely to the efforts of missionary John Chase, who came here in the 1930's. But these churches do not count with these transplanted Church of Christ folk from the American south. Despite their desperate need for each other, there is no fellowship between them. The Americans have taught the Korean brethren to be as exclusivistic as themselves. Some of them are together on this occasion, but this is because I encouraged it.

I elected to draw upon some of the great truths of *Romans* and had no intention of upsetting anyone, but my teaching on justification by faith, grace, salvation, baptism, nature of the church, the indwelling Spirit, the eventual conversion of the Jews, the redemption of nature, and Christian liberty has proved threatening to some. I have an "uncertain sound" about baptism and my view of the Church of Christ upon earth is far too broad. After reading an issue of this journal, one sister chose not to attend the sessions, explaining to me with rare candor that she did not want her views disturbed. Early in these sessions I concluded that I had blown it, spoiling a retreat for all these good people, for I had caused them discomfort. I have known all along, of course, that migration to another country does not necessarily make a sectarian less sectarian, but I was hardly prepared for such a concentration of our sectism at a retreat in this quaint little nation that the Chinese long ago described as "the land of the scholars."

At one of our sessions a brother who is a naval officer, spoke out in protest when Lt. Cmdr. Weldon Bowling, formerly a part of our Denton church and my host, called on brother Ellis, the Christian Church missionary, to lead prayer, insisting that "one of our brotherhood" should do the praying. Weldon responded graciously to this gross rudeness by calling on one who belongs to the right church, and even brother Ellis understood, but I could hardly abide such discourtesy. While I refrained from public comment, I told the officer that his behavior was an insult to Christ, for he had rejected a brother for whom Christ died, that the brother had made a great sacrifice for many years and had crossed the country to enjoy fellowship with us. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," I told him in no uncertain terms. While I was terribly embarrassed, the episode being so contrary to what we were learning from

Romans, my resentment toward the brother soon subsided and gave way to understanding. After all, I was once that sectarian myself!

The Father has a way of lining the clouds with silver, and He seemed to use this untoward incident to turn things around. This helped people to see what I had been teaching, that we receive each other as Christ receives us, even when we are wrong, "to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:8) rather than to the glory of a party. They now began to tell me that they understood what I was trying to say and even that I was a God-send. And poor Weldon felt redeemed when they told him it was the best retreat of all.

I am left more impressed than ever with the hazards involved in an assault on "the Church of Christ mind." The only effective dynamics, I am persuaded, are truth and love — "Speaking the truth in love" as Scripture puts it. When these folk gave me a hard time in the earlier sessions ("We are all upset by what you are implying"), I resolved to stand firmly for what I believe to be true, but with love. My love for them, I believe, was evident, and it was this that provided my entree with them. "But I like your attitude," they would concede, even when they were otherwise suspicious. *Truth in love.* It must always be our charge. We may not have the truth in all that we say, but our search for truth must always be in love.

Our retreat was enhanced by the presence of a congregation of Koreans on two of the evenings. This was especially appreciated by those Americans who have had no opportunity to assemble with Korean brethren. The Korean brethren sing heartily and joyfully, and they are the best argument for acappella music that you will find. They sing the old gospel songs more than the great hymns, and they could sing all night, being the happy people that they are. They are gungho for bowing, especially the women to the men, an most especially those they deem worthy of greater respect. I have everything going for me, being an American, a reverend doctor, *and aged!* One is especially honored in this land once he reaches threescore, an idiom that my interpreter did not know.

I immersed three of the Koreans into Christ during the retreat, using a bathtub in a nearby home, which was possible only because these people are small of stature. This helped to redeem me with the Americans who presume I put down baptism when I stress "the circumcision of the heart" and for not saying *categorically* that it is essential. My approach was not what they were used to since I urged the folk to follow Jesus in baptism, noting that it was then that he received the Spirit, relating this to the promise of the Spirit in Acts 2:38 and the remission of sins. I argued that if Jesus was baptized when he had no sins, how much more should we be baptized, being sinners.

I seemed to have scored well with the Koreans, who invited me to their own church, which Americans seldom attend. They like for me to put on a drama and act it out, as I did the story of the prodigal son, assuming the various roles as I moved freely about the platform. Even my interpreter laughed with delight over my antics, and he enjoyed following me around in his Korean church on Sunday, interpreting my story of Jonah, which I included in an explanation of "the sign of Jonah," which is the only sign Jesus would give an evil generation. The American influence upon the Korean service is complete, for the language was the only discernible difference, except that they serve the Supper (with traditional plural cups) in white gloves (what else for these impeccable people?) and pray vigorously and endlessly.

I have written this piece all the way to the cabin of my jumbo jet 747, and am now aboard a Korean Airlines flight nonstop Seoul to Los Angeles in 12 hours. I shall always treasure this experience in the only nation on earth that celebrates an "Alphabet Day," in honor of the birth of its written language, which says something for its literary heritage. We celebrate Halloween and they the alphabet! Who is enlightened, after all?

The Koreans are an indomitable people. Seoul is an impressive city, the fifth largest in the world with its nearly 9 millions, and it is marked by towering edifices of steel and glass and wide, park-like boulevards, but as recently as the Korean War it was in ruins. When this airline recently lost a plane on the runway in Seoul, the captain, who could easily have escaped the fire, as most everyone did, opted to stay aboard and die rather than to live in disgrace. He was the captain and was responsible, as he saw it, even when it was not his fault. These folk have guts. When a Communist from North Korea was arrested as a spy, he forthwith bit off his tongue (by a severe uppercut to the chin), lest he be made to talk under torture. He was nonetheless summarily shot in this besieged land that cannot afford to hold any brief for Communism, dividing its people as it has.

We have 35,000 combat-ready troops along the DMZ, along with a large force of South Koreans. They confront an array of some 150,000 Communists. When everyone agrees that the U.S. troops must stay, that does not suggest that there is any lack of the will to fight on the part of the Koreans. But with Communist bombers only 7 minutes from Seoul, it is a hard way to live.

Brother Hyun Sub Park and his wife Ta Ja Lee (We compared notes on our wives' names; when I left him he was still trying to negotiate *Ouida*, which is not all that unusual even for Americans) came to Kimpo Airport to see me off. He had talked with his elders and had brought an invitation for me to return for an extended visit with the Korean Churches of Christ. He was impressed with my emphasis upon the mission of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. *We need that!* he assured me. He is also a chaplain to the Korean military and wants me to visit various bases when and if I return.

He meets with his congregation each morning at 4:30 for prayer, and he told me that they would be praying for me. It will be 1:30 p.m. in Denton when those humble folk gather for prayer, walking through the cold from their tiny houses (with gas at 5.00 a gallon hardly anyone has a car, though the preacher hopes for one), and I will be led now and again to turn from my typewriter and join those precious believers in prayer to Him who knows neither East nor West. But whether a.m. or p.m. those in Jesus in "the land of the morning calm" will be close to my heart. — *the Editor*

Pilgrimage of Joy . . . No. 50

NOTHING IS AS IMPORTANT AS JESUS

W. Carl Ketcherside

The year of 1972 will never be forgotten by Richard Nixon. It must both thrill and haunt his every waking moment. It was the time of his greatest triumph. It was also the beginning of his downfall. On November 7 he was re-elected to serve a second term with a vote well in excess of forty-seven million. In February, accompanied by Henry Kissinger, he had gone to Communist China. The television screen in every American home registered the progress he made in his negotiations. It was a time of exhiliration for him. His goals were being realized. His dreams were coming true.

On the night of June 17 occurred the Watergate break-in. Those who were apprehended had electronic equipment in their possession. The incident was not at first seen in its full potential. The poison in its fangs was well concealed. On June 22, and again on August 29, President Nixon assured the nation that no one in his administration had anything to do with it. But after his re-election, the serpent began to uncoil itself, striking first at this one and then at another. Before it was over the pride of the haughty would be humbled. The dream temple would lie in shattered ruin. A hero would become a villain. And disillusionment would spread like a pall over the nation.

On May 2, J. Edgar Hoover would die of a heart attack in Washington. He was 77 years of age. He had been Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation since 1924. Hated by Communists and fellow-

travelers alike, he had seemed like a towering rock against those who would undermine our national ideals. He had been at the forefront of the battle when roving gangs sought to pillage us. As he grew older, the first accusing fingers were pointed in his direction and he had to reckon with a new kind of opposition. His opponents carried briefcases filled with statistics rather than machine-guns filled with bullets. It was like an old stag brought to bay by the pack yapping at his heels, making his last stand with his back against the mountain. On May 15, Governor George C. Wallace was shot by a 21 year old drifter, Arthur Bremer, in Laurel Maryland. The day after Christmas Harry S. Truman died in Kansas City, Missouri, at the age of 88.

I began the year in sunny California in Escondido. The "College of the Bible" attracted brethren from all over the region. I spoke each night at the congregation and held an open forum each morning. Men and women seemed intrigued by the fact that they could ask anything they desired. We did not always agree but we had a glorious time in the Lord. No one asked whether you were this or that. It seemed enough that all were in Christ, all wanted to learn, and all were teachable. Between sessions I addressed civic clubs in the area and spoke to other special groups. In all of these encounters I kept in mind the motto of Alexander Campbell: "He that would plead this heavenly cause must stand before the people with peace in his heart, union upon his lip, and truth in his eye."

The last of January I returned to Florida College for the lectureship. An attack upon the principles which I espoused was to be made and I wanted to be present for it. When I was there before G. K. Wallace, Pat Hardeman and Bill Humble were the prominent figures. All of them had occupied really prime spots on the program. Now all of them were out. Their names were not even mentioned. I met with a number of students, at their request, in a room in the men's dormitory for several hours in the afternoon. They were full of questions. I answered them without reservation. It was suggested that I appear before everyone and take their queries. The school, which was presided over by James Cope, would not allow such an arrangement as if it were part of the lectureship proceedings. It was arranged that it be held at 10:00 o'clock after all regular activities were over. It was to be in the building of the University Church of Christ.

Standing room only was the word which went forth fifteen minutes before the scheduled time. Every conceivable niche was filled for the meeting which lasted three hours and finally ended at 1:00 o'clock a.m. It provided the greatest excitement of the lectureship. I spoke for thirty minutes on my concept of fellowship. I was followed by Robert Turner, who admitted that he had only read a copy or two of Mission Messenger. I then sat down on the platform with Brother Turner, and we were joined by Ferrell Jenkins and Harry Pickup, Jr. It was interesting to watch the men

who did the questioning. Some of the older preachers imagined themselves to be prosecuting attorneys with myself as defendant. Since I refused to accept the role or play their game they did not know what to do next. They were accustomed to someone who rolled over and played dead when they queried him. An occasional student seized the limelight to establish himself as one of "the faithful" But the majority of the audience listened seriously and soberly.

I am convinced that great good was done, especially with the more observant and erudite students. I have seen reports in the more partisan journals that at least fifty of the most brilliant students in the sect have been affected by my plea. It would seem that this fact alone would cause the party leaders to take thought. If only lazy and sloven students were affected it might be brushed aside as of little consequence, but when top-notch students see the value of the priorities emphasized it is another matter. Since that fateful night in the history of our modern thrust for renewal I have done a lot of thinking about the brethren who oppose support of what they call institutionalism.

I reject the brand of "antis" as applied to these brethren. It is silly and childish. All of us are "anti" on a lot of things. In some respects their contentions are but an extension of some of my own former efforts. But the charge quite frequently made by their opponents that they "out-Sommer" Daniel Sommer is not to be credited. Their position is not the same as his. I knew Daniel Sommer personally. He was often in my home. He ate at my table and shared with me his thinking. The brethren at Florida College are not espousing a warmed-over version of the Sommer ideology.

I think the rise of the party is a phenomenon which occurs at periodic intervals in every group which is based upon a legalistic stance for its survival. The only safeguard against it is the investiture of one man with infallibility, and the universal recognition of him as the authority. As long as that authority is respected and revered the organization will remain intact. It is because of the erosion of authority that the great monolithic structure of the Roman Catholic Church is faced with such problems in our day. The seeds of division are inherent in every legalistic group. Given the correct conditions they will germinate and a fracture will occur.

The regarding of the New Testament scriptures as a written code of laws coupled with the idea that God provided an exact pattern to be meticulously followed in all ages has operated in such a way as to defy the lordship of Jesus and substitute the rule of dominant men. These have generally been editors among the various segments of the Churches of Christ. Sometime they have been elders who were inflexible. Every time the culture altered division has occurred. Everytime someone learns something a new schism occurs. Division is part and parcel of the attitude toward the

plan of God. It is not at all a question of respect for the authority of the Word, but of respect for a particular way of looking at it. Many men have deep regard for the revelation of heaven who do not have the same regard for the interpretation of an editor.

As I view it, these brethren are guilty of profound errors in their reasoning. They do not distinguish between the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of the apostles. They do not understand the nature of worship. They do not understand the nature of fellowship. They have arisen as a protest movement against what they considered certain abuses, and allowed it to gravitate into a separate and exclusive party. This was the great mistake. Brethren may think as they wish about Hearld of Truth, and they will do so. They may support it or not support it. They may watch it or not watch it. But when either group creates a party around its deduction it becomes factional. And factionalism is a sin. This makes their opinion as important as the death of Jesus. One must believe it to be regarded as in the faith. It becomes an unwritten creed. But nothing is as important as Jesus — just nothing!

Of course each party attracts those persons who thrust themselves into prominence by intemperate and injudicious statements. They generally prove to be an embarrasment to those who sigh for Jerusalem and are sincerely saddened by division and strife among the saints. Partisan papers agitate the situation by publishing almost vituperative reports against those who disagree with them. H. E. Phillips wrote in *Searching the Scriptures,* a monthly periodical, about "the despicable doctrine of fellowship." Others were almost as uncouth in their attacks. But none of these things move me. The road of a reformer has always been a rocky route to travel. But there are great rewards.

Changing the subject, two deaths occurred during the year that were of some significance. Alexander Campbell Johnson, Jr., died at the age of 74. Maria Louise Campbell Barclay died at the age of 105. Both of them were the great-grandchildren of Alexander Campbell. Alexander himself had died on March 4, 1866. It was the Lord's Day and just as it drew to a close he was called to his eternal rest. Now his great-grandchildren were going home at an advanced age.

March 6-10 found me at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Because of a building program our meetings were held in the YMCA building. I arrived just in time to see a member of a rock music group baptized. The leader had been in the hospital as a result of a real bad drug trip, when a candy-striper met him, told him about Jesus, and changed his entire life. His conversion had a great effect upon the other members and one by one they discovered the tug of the Galilean upon their hearts and made the great transformation. They were a jovial group who had tried everything the world had to offer.

They conceived the idea of writing Jesus words to some of their tunes and belting them out to the far-out generation who made the scene.

They suggested that we make a joint appearance on the university campus where they had been "big time" before. I agreed and they secured Presidents hall. By this time they were calling themselves HOPE, and they put up posters all over the place with our pictures and the inscription "Hope With Carl." I was astounded at the drawing power they exhibited. The great hall filled completely and students and faculty jostled for standing room around the walls. They spilled out into the hall.

For almost an hour HOPE played and sang. I did not understand a word they were saying. They testified of their faith and then introduced me as "The Answer Man." I went for fifty minutes. The questions were terrific. Some tried to trip me up as the Pharisees had done with Jesus. I sailed through the troubled waters without a break. Many of the questions were significant and penetrating. The entire thing was televised. It made the meeting. The night sessions were filled with people. The day sessions produced an interested group who were eager to know. I am pleased to report that all the members of the rock music group went back to school. One became a schoolteacher. The other four became preachers of the gospel. God works in wonderful ways and through all kinds of agencies. How wonderful of His grace to turn drug users into disciples of the Nazarene and into useful servants of His kingdom.

FACES

Robert Meyers

Perhaps no one quite understands why certain moments in his life or in his reading have been memorable beyond others. One has a tendency to remember odd things, little bits and pieces that were not of any special importance even in the event or book where he found them. But they stick in the mind like burrs to nylon socks.

Such a moment came for me many years ago when I first read Thomas Wolfe's description of the face of one of his teachers. He said that the man's face was one on which the fierce condor, Thought, had preyed. And suddenly there was invoked for me an image of a *thought-ravaged* face, marked by the insistent, troubling demands of the mind at work.

Ever since, with considerable awareness of what I am doing, I have looked for those thought-ravaged faces. Eyes that brood with compassion for the endless struggles and the monumental ignorance of mankind. Lips that betray a curve of anguish for the always-breaking heart. A brow that shows the clawmarks of Wolfe's bird.

Naturally I have tended to contrast another sort of face with this one. The complacent, smug, self-assured face of the man who battles nothing. The eyes that have looked upon too many easy victories and grown calculating. The lips that have learned to shape themselves to whatever mold is fashionable for acceptance. The brow that seems unmarked by meditation, by analysis, by agonies of doubt.

I remember a play by James Barrie in which some character laments the loss of the "bright boy face" when he meets again, in later life, a friend he had known when young. I have had that experience. I have remembered a face alive and eager, thrusting forward almost in its ardor to know and experience. And then, years later, I have met its owner and found to my dismay that it had settled into heavy, fat lines of complacency, quite ready to take the world on the world's terms.

Yet it has nothing to do with age, of course. For some I know at eighty have that keen, bright, eager look upon their faces. For them, the great adventure of knowing and experiencing has never grown dull. They are blessed.

Some people have no absolutes, no real convictions. And as the years pass, the faces of these people grow slack and weak. Futility is written large upon them. But a man of principle, a man who has suffered (as men of principle always do) for his convictions — that man's face shows increasing nobility and majesty as the years pass.

I am, then, a face-watcher. I have been for most of my adult life. Always, in the pulpit, before I rise to speak, my eyes look for faces that are alive, eager, curious, and thoughtful. And when I go where other ministers are, I always look for what shows on their faces. I am so often disappointed that it makes me glad I cannot see my own.

Believing devoutly that *thought* really does leave its mark, I am surprised at the frequent absence of any such mark on faces that ought most to show it. How can a man's face be bland and smooth and unmarked by the clawmarks of agony who says that he speaks for God? I cannot but think that any thoughtful preacher's face would grow more and more brooding and compassionate as he worked among men until at last he would bear some resemblance to Lincoln.

And from such a face, one believes, there would come words of slow and quiet wisdom. Not glib phrases that trip across the tongue as if they had no real acquaintance with the hot forges of thought, but words carefully delivered as if each one came newly forged from the molten soul of the man.

Such words come from the depths of what one *is,* and if at bottom there is nothing then one must borrow from some shelf of easy access. A friend of mine likes to talk of what he calls the "sense of the tragic." He feels that many of our people lack a real comprehension of the tragic aspects of human existence, that they do not *feel* the confusion, the fear, the heartache of others.

He and I agree that it is futile to seek help from a face unmarked by a sense of the tragic, since it cannot help us. We turn instead to a face on which that fierce condor has preyed, and across which the shadow of pain and sadness has fallen. We have learned that one can make a pretty good guess about what a man will be able to give, just by looking carefully at his face.

Sir Thomas Browne wrote once: "It is the common wonder of all men how among so many millons of faces there should be none alike." True indeed, and what a wealth of information those unique faces reveal!

OUR CHANGING WORLD

Jim Noblett of Tulsa called to tell us that a prayer breakfast is planned for that city come April, and that it has the support of city officials and church leaders, including Jews, Protestants, and Roman Catholics. One Church of Christ minister is sharing in the planning, which includes a visit from Pat Boone.

Dwain Evans, who visited our congregation in Denton recently, tells us that the Bering Drive Church of Christ in Houston, where he is an elder, is still having two services on Sunday morning, one of which is more traditional than the other. This seems to take care of a situation that might otherwise polarize the church. Bering Drive was one of the first *avant garde* Churches of Christ.

I recently represented Harvard at the inauguration of the new president of North Texas State University, which was a gala affair, the university seeking to correct a lot of bad press, due to irregularities of the previous administration. But Ouida was the heroine of the affair, serving as the inaugural secretary, which involved several months of work for the university. As protocol dictates, the delegates in the academic parade line up according to the age of their institution. Since someone was there from Oxford I had to march *second,* to which I issued a protest. I insisted that having both the reputation of Harvard *and* the inaugural secretary behind me, I should still be first, but the man from Oxford did not see it that way. Two Church of Christ schools, by the way, Lipscomb and Abilene, had delegates listed in the inaugural program.

A new college called Christian Heritage will open next year in Texarkana. While supported mainly by Christian Churches, it seeks a wide base of Restoration folk. Both David Reagan, also of this area and of Church of Christ background, and I have been asked to serve on the adjunct faculty. We will fly in once or twice a month to do our thing. Charles Herndon, now of Dallas Christian College, will serve as the school's first president.

One of our favorite charities is the American Friends Service Committee. Quaker oriented, they recently reported that part of their funds is going for desks and school supplies, as well as beds and unbreakable bowls, to the children of Cambodia's 5,000 schools. They are also working to improve the housing and nutrition of Chicano farm laborers in Texas. But this is not even a tithing of their work around the world.